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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/542,437	03/24/2006	Hartwig Preckel	175.8246USU	2752
27623	7590	03/29/2011		
OHLANDT, GREELEY, RUGGIERO & PERLE, LLP				
ONE LANDMARK SQUARE, 10TH FLOOR				
STAMFORD, CT 06901				
EXAMINER				
LUDLOW, JAN M				
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
1773				
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03/29/2011		PAPER		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/542,437

Applicant(s)

PRECKEL, HARTWIG

Examiner

Jan M. Ludlow

Art Unit

1773

Period for Reply -- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 14 February 2011.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,2 and 5-19 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,2 and 5-19 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 15 July 2005 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-945)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on February 14, 2011 has been entered.

1. The following guidelines illustrate the preferred layout for the specification of a utility application. These guidelines are suggested for the applicant's use.

Arrangement of the Specification

As provided in 37 CFR 1.77(b), the specification of a utility application should include the following sections in order. Each of the lettered items should appear in upper case, without underlining or bold type, as a section heading. If no text follows the section heading, the phrase "Not Applicable" should follow the section heading:

- (a) TITLE OF THE INVENTION.
- (b) CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS.
- (c) STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT.
- (d) THE NAMES OF THE PARTIES TO A JOINT RESEARCH AGREEMENT.
- (e) INCORPORATION-BY-REFERENCE OF MATERIAL SUBMITTED ON A COMPACT DISC.
- (f) BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION.
 - (1) Field of the Invention.
 - (2) Description of Related Art including information disclosed under 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98.
- (g) BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION.
- (h) BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWING(S).
- (i) DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION.
- (j) CLAIM OR CLAIMS (commencing on a separate sheet).
- (k) ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE (commencing on a separate sheet).
- (l) SEQUENCE LISTING (See MPEP § 2424 and 37 CFR 1.821-1.825. A "Sequence Listing" is required on paper if the application discloses a nucleotide or amino acid sequence as defined in 37 CFR 1.821(a) and if

the required "Sequence Listing" is not submitted as an electronic document on compact disc).

2. Claims 1-2, 5-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

In claim 1, it is not clear how "producing at least one series of droplets" is related to the activating pulse. In claim 1, it is unclear what is meant by "this deepened portion"—each of the further deepened portions? In claim 1, penultimate line, it is unclear what is meant by "the series of droplets"—one or more (or each?) of the at least one series of droplets?

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

4. Claims 1, 6-9, 12-15, 17-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hayes (4877745) in view of Suzuki (2002/0089558).

Hayes teaches positioning a piezoelectric dispenser 400 over a cell 904, dispensing plural drops by repeatedly activating a pulse generator, and repeating the process to fill different reagents into plural cells. See, e.g., cols. 7-8, Figure 1.

Hayes fails to teach supplying a damping pulse after dispensing.

Suzuki teaches a piezoelectric dispensing method in which a cancel pulse (instant damping pulse) is provided after the actuating pulses to control vibration in the device so as to prevent satellite droplets and improve operational stability ([0006, 0008], Figures 4, 11A).

It would have been obvious to provide a damping pulse after the actuating pulses in Hayes in order to prevent satellite (stray) droplets and improve operational stability of the piezoelectric dispenser as taught by Suzuki. With respect to claims 9, 18, one of ordinary skill would have understood that the duration of the damping pulse is a result-effective variable in providing force for the damping of the vibrations; it would therefore have been obvious to optimize the duration of the pulse in order to optimize the performance of the dispenser.

5. Claims 2, 10, 11, 16, 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hayes and Suzuki as applied to claims above, and further in view of Juliana (4266232)..

The primary references fail to teach a prepulse of larger amplitude.

Juliana teaches method of piezoelectric dispensing in which an initial drive pulse is made larger than the subsequent pulses in order compensate for the additional

aerodynamic drag and meniscus dynamics experienced by the first drop in a series (col. 4, lines 4-24; Figs 5-6).

It would have been obvious to provide a prepulse of larger amplitude in the method of Hayes and Suzuki in order to compensate for the additional aerodynamic drag and meniscus dynamics experienced by the first drop in a series as taught by Juliana. With respect to claims 10, 19, one of ordinary skill would have understood that the amplitude of the prepulse is a result-effective variable in providing force for overcoming aerodynamic drag and meniscus dynamics; it would therefore have been obvious to optimize the amplitude of the pulse in order to optimize the performance of the dispenser.

6. Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hayes and Suzuki as applied to claims above, and further in view of Takahashi (6109716).

The primary references fail to teach a reverse phase damping pulse.

Takahashi teaches a conventional piezoelectric dispensing method in which the damping (cancel) pulse is reversed in phase from the activation pulse in order to damp oscillations (col. 2, lines 33-49).

It would have been obvious to use a reverse phase damping pulse in the invention of Hayes and Suzuki in order to use a conventional damping pulse for cancelling oscillations as taught by Takahashi.

7. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims above have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jan M. Ludlow whose telephone number is (571) 272-1260. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, 11:30 am - 8:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jill A. Warden can be reached on (571) 272-1267. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Jan M. Ludlow
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1773

/Jan M. Ludlow/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 1773